

# ANARCHIST FEMINIST NOTES

vol. 1 no. 1

december, 1976

## NAMING OUR NEWSLETTER

Since the newsletter is now the combined communications network for two previous newsletters, we felt that we should decide a new name for it. After a lot of fancy brainstorming, we settled on "Anarchist Feminist Notes". It's simple and it describes what the newsletter really is--our notes to each other. If you have a better idea and would like the name changed, please write to the next issue.

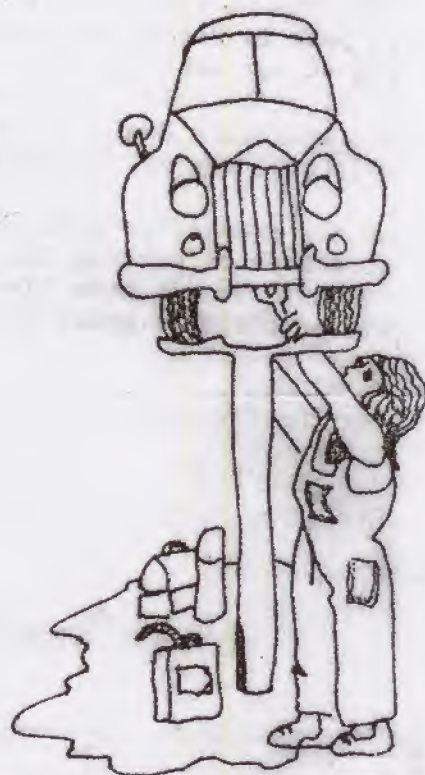
## ORGANIZING THE "NOTES"— some modest proposals

Since we received the newsletter put out by the New York women last August, we have prepared for putting out this issue in several ways. First, we discussed a lot of issues about the newsletter. These included a desire that the newsletter come out regularly so that communications included are up to date.

### Propose Quarterly Newsletter

We decided that one way to address this concern was to have a set quarterly deadline for letters and articles to be sent to the group producing the newsletter and for that group to be committed to mailing the newsletter within a month after the deadline. We want to propose it to the network. If there are any objections to the proposal they should be submitted to the next issue. We

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



## gay anarchists meet

A gay anarchist conference was held Sept. 3-6 in Buffalo, NY. About 30 people (7 or 8 women) attended. An informal group workshop was held. One suggestion for future contact was to get started a newsletter to exchange views, ideas, feelings, activities. Anyone interested - send news, graphics, maillist additions as well as a donation if you can afford it to:

gay anarchist newsletter  
c/o comelunity press  
13 east 17 st. #6  
NYC NY 10003



# LETTERS:

WHO'S TO DO THE NEXT ISSUE?

## —chicago, illinois

We the Anarchist Feminists of Chicago have agreed to merge the Anarchist Feminist network notes with the Emma Goldman Feminist Newsletter.

We will not give you our mailing list until we ask everyone if they want you to have it. We feel we feel we have to respect the wishes of people on our mailing list. If your publication does any censoring, we, the Anarchist Feminists of Chicago, will pull out of the project.

At the present we will not commit ourselves to putting out any future issues. We all have little money and are involved in other projects.

M1 M1

for the Anarchists Femists of  
Chicago  
P.O. Box 801  
Evanston, Illinois 60204



## —Ithaca, new york

Hi. I'm a member of Tiamat, an anarcha-feminist study-support group. We really liked the last newsletter and would like to take responsibility for doing an issue. I haven't received the issue the Des Moines group is doing. I am enclosing some money for costs.

Has anyone volunteered for the next issue after yours? Either way let us know so we can figure when to put one out. Thanks.  
Carol Tiamat Ornstein  
609 N. Tioga St.  
Ithaca, N.Y. 14850

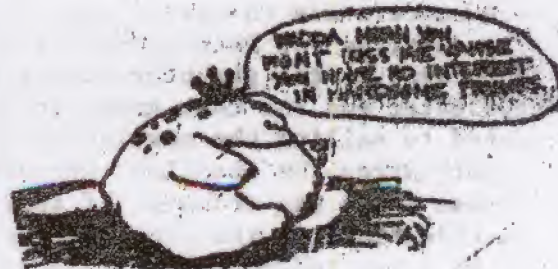
The Anarcha-feminist group of Chicago has disbanded. Everyone felt we weren't really doing anything important. Some of the members are involved in different activities (e.g. working with battered housewives, one is involved with a womens group and newspaper at a university; one is involved in a coed attempt to put together a Chicago political newspaper). I am involved in a androgynous anarchist discussion group; I am working on organizing a regional anarchist federation and a network for rebel workers; I distribute and work on the Black Star: an anarchist review and I am presently trying to get a political animated cartoon together. I am also translating a book from Spanish to English about Ms Luisa Capetillo, a Puerto Rican anarchist.

...I feel the Notes should continue on a rotating basis. When I was in New York City, I spoke to the ComaUnity Press people and they said if no one speaks up, they would put out the issue after yours. I think they are writing you concerning this.

What is the merged newsletter going to be called? Should we ask people if they want the name changed?

Input from Men? I feel there are so many publications open to men that excluding them from participation in the Notes cannot possibly hurt their own development. The main task of the Notes should be in developing the abilities and self organization of womyn. I am not a separatist, but I recognize the importance for womyn to have their own organizations.

MIM1





## ...DO THE NEXT ISSUE? (Continued)

-new york, n.y.

I saw MIMI (of Chicago) in New York ...and she assured me of her group's willingness to take responsibility for the 4th issue of the newsletter. Frankly, I don't consider it a good idea for any one group to take on responsibility for the newsletter on a long term basis. As I see it, the newsletter (both the former Anarcho-Feminist Network Notes, the Emma Goldman Network, and this coordinated effort) comprise an attempt to form a real network of anarchist women for the purposes of contact and communication, solidarity, and participation on local, national and international levels - all of which are more important to build than considerations of the clumsiness of the method and content. Not that I undervalue content - far from it - of the pitfalls of newsletters is their tendency to become boring - but genuine networks can only be built through the input and participation of as many of us as possible. The formula of circulating responsibility for publishing the newsletter, although it may at this point be frustrating, labourious, and inefficient, if it works, no when it works can only encourage this process of participation and communication - most important, it is a way of getting anarcho-feminist groups together on a local basis - groups may well start working together through collective effort on the newsletter and stay together for other types of activity. The newsletter primarily should be for contact, for information about what we are doing in different parts of the world and of the country, what we are involved in and what our problems are. The network should encourage cooperation,

raise practical issues, be inspirational, help us "connect" - travelling we can feel less isolated, more committed. But all this takes time, energy, and of course, self and group confidence. It is disheartening when women don't respond, discouraging when groups don't volunteer their time energy, and of course, slender financial resources to put together an issue, upsetting that names on a mailing list seem mostly to remain anonymous (this is uncomfortably true in N. Y.C. where local communication is something urgent to work on - we don't know each other). The number of women on the list who are not actively committed to anarchism (or perhaps a synonym or perspective corresponding to the word) and who are also strong feminists is perhaps equalled by or a fraction of the women who would love to participate in the network if they knew about it. The network will take

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



Booker T. Washington's Yellow Pages



## ...DO THE NEXT ISSUE? (Continued)

time, as I was saying, to work and perhaps after all it will fail, from practical or any other considerations. If this were to happen I would rather see one strong group try to maintain this newsletter. The continuity and constancy of vision, the presentation of specific viewpoints, the special character of a magazine which makes it stimulating and exciting --- when it works --- are best suited to a fairly stable, committed small group collective process perhaps. Such a process would not, I think, help our network as I see it be a participatory process of interchange and feedback.

The newsletter network is an open one and obviously open format is risky in that there are opportunities for takeover and co-option. For as, theoretically, any woman can become part of



the network, so can particles of the government as well as authoritarian socialists prone to takeover and also men gain access to it. I want to respond to the question of male input which was brought very briefly --- because I do find it redundant as an issue. If men input this is no longer an anarcho-feminist newsletter. For those of us who also work in mixed male-female groups, there are far more opportunities within the anarchist and social-change movement for such joint work and I am sure there are women in the network who are willing only to work and struggle with other women and who would feel especially hurt by even considering allowing male input. There is also the SRAF newsletter, an open forum for all anarchists which is available from SRAF print, Box 4091, Mountain View Ca., has existed for a long time and airs many different views, including anarcho-feminist and male chauvinist in the form of continuing correspondence. Male input when its not so disguised as to be unrecognizable ought to be ignored. My position, by the way, is not coming out of separatism as I in fact work with men both gay and straight on various projects, but I thoroughly distrust "male feminists" and am very suspicious of men who want to contribute to a feminist, women's, network - seems like the same old patronizing, patriarchal trip often disguised as pseudo-humble white-liberal-type takeover of our energies. Men can learn from women as a class, but women can only learn from a few men as individuals. As I mentioned, I do associate with men, none of whom I'm glad to say would feel that their contribution to a feminist organization would be part of their struggle against sexism. Enough.

Noa  
Box 562, Cooper Station,  
N.Y., N.Y. 10003

\*Des Moines women called both these groups and found that neither can do the next



## - CHICAGO

I am sorry to say, if you do not already know, that the Anarcha-Feminist group in Chicago has disbanded. I know, it was a short lived experience. Each woman, though, should respond to your letter individually. Each of us is active in anarchist, feminist or an amalgam of the two politics, in her own right.

I don't mind contributing articles to your newsletter. I have decided to help Arlene Myers with her A-F Anthology, a long overdue project. I will be going to the Labadie Collection in Ann Arbor in December, and visiting another collection in Champaign a little later to try to glean some information. I have several topics in mind, but will wait until I get to both collections before I narrow down. Though, I must say the link between the first feminists and Haywood and friends does interest me. Not to mention the many women behind the scenes in anarchist society in the late 19th and early 20th century. I must not fall into a trap, but narrow my topic.

I would be willing to offering a synopsis of whatever I do to your newsletter, but obviously that wouldn't be forthcoming for many months.

I am opposed to men working on a woman's publication.

Womankindly,  
Bernice Murry.

1005 W. George, 2F  
Chicago 60657

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WE FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THE REFERENCE TO THE NEWSLETTER AS "OURS". IT'S IMPORTANT TO EMPHASIZE THAT THE NEWSLETTER BELONGS TO ALL WOMEN INVOLVED. IT'S NOT THE "PROPERTY" OF THE GROUP THAT IS PUTTING OUT ANY PARTICULAR ISSUE.

## - NEW YORK

the des moines anarcho-feminist group has felt the need to raise the issue of "how to handle input from men." men have many places to express their anarchist views. there are many anarchist groups which we, as women, may choose or not choose to join - in order to work with men. the PURPOSE of this newsletter is to have a space where we can come together as women to share our feminist and anarchist visions, to create a space which is necessary for all of us. I would suggest that men who are anarchist and think of themselves as feminist could:

- A. form male-feminist-anarchist groups or caucusses
- B. share their feminist perspective in working within anarchist groups, newspapers, actions.
- C. for gay men (and lesbians) a gay anarchist newsletter is forming - for articles, news, mailist: see address in this issue.

IF YOU HAVE ACCESS TO A MIMEOGRAPH, XEROXING, OR PRINTING - YOU COULD DO THE NEXT NEWSLETTER!

i think that generally a group of women (rather than just one person) should make the commitment to produce and mail an issue. by moving around the country, one group won't be continually expected to put in time & energy, stamps and money. VOLUNTEER IN TIME FOR YOUR ADDRESS INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED IN THE NEXT ISSUE.

Mercure Volt  
Come! Unity Press  
13 E. 17th St., #6  
New York, N.Y. 10003





**somerville, mass.**

I would like to be put on the mailing list for EMMA (anarchist-feminist) newsletter. Mimi from the Anarchist feminist group in Chicago told me that her group is not now publishing any kind of anarcha-feminist newsletter, but that you are. I would love to receive it as I feel most isolated in finding current contemporary real-women anarchist-feminists....I'm sure you know what I mean.

In Boston I work at a self-help health center that is collectively owned and run by those of us who work there. To me self-help and working collectively are ways to live out anarchism, and working in women's health helps me concretize my commitment to women. But the theory and ways to discuss this with other women are sorely lacking for me.

If there are back issues of your newsletter I would appreciate receiving those--I feel so starved for reading material.

Also Mimi said the newsletter is free. Is funding/money a problem for you that are putting it out? I have very little money, but if it would help I could send a dollar if you need it. Let me know, OK?

In the struggle,

Judi Stein  
223 Sumner ST.  
Apt. 3-R  
Somerville, Ma. 02145

**florence, mass.**

Have been meaning to write--remembering papers I've been involved with in the past and how discouraging it can be without community support. Let it be said. Am real glad you're doing the newsletter. Yes, it makes sense for you all to do the next 4 issues--deadlines are helpful as is regular address.

Am enclosing review of THE DISPOSSESSED for newsletter. Dale, the woman who wrote it probably will write for the newsletter. Regarding input from men--I don't want to put them down but I'm not sure I want to put them in, on any kind of regular basis. If something applies - ~~mmm~~ O.K. I guess but within reason.

Deborah Jacobs  
P.O. Box 341  
Florence, Mass.





LETTERS, (Continued)

## northampton, mass.

Somehow, at Spark bookstore here in Northampton, Mass. we have a copy of a letter mailed Oct. 31, about the "merging of two networks" and plans to do an anarchist feminist newsletter. It's good to hear about it, and I believe Deborah Jacobs has sent along a copy of a book review of The Dispossessed that I wrote as part of a series Spark collective is doing in a local progressive paper. I'll be glad to see this newsletter, as well as share it with the women in an anarchist-feminist study group I am part of, and of course with Spark. What I'm curious about is what these two existing networks are that you refer to. Also, are there other issues of anarchist-feminist newsletters hanging around somewhere (besides the one that the Emma Goldman Brigade put out over a year ago?)

I was at the anarchist conference at Hampshire college this month, and while I did find many women who are involved in collectives or consider themselves anarchists, still the overwhelming presence of male anarchists who are very active and moderately unconscious of their sexism was discouraging. It's the same old thing, you walk into a room full of men and say, look, this room is full of men, and you hope that before they get defensive you can make the point that there is something going on that keeps women from participating even here. And I do think that the focus on small groups, good process, and local needs encourage, or should encourage women to be involved in anarchist groups. Clearly there is a need for women anarchists to contact and support each other in the process of moving anarchism from male domination. I also find the theoretical direction recently reopened with Peggy Kornegger's articles in Second Wave important to explore more. And, as with all kinds of people's struggles, there is a great need to bring to light all the terrific women anarchists of the last

I hope you will take the time to put out several issues of this newsletter, since I agree with you that a stable space to send material allows for more consistency, and later on a smooth transition to another group in another part of the country. I have mixed feelings about the way to deal with men's responses or criticisms. Occasionally I find them worthwhile, and since I don't consider men The Enemy I like to be surprised about the fact that we can all change and grow and learn from one another. Yet too often the response is a tiresome reworking of "tell me how to live my life so you'll like me" or plain old defensiveness. And that we don't need. (Nothing like a nice definitive answer, right?)

Looking forward to the fruits of your labor,

in struggle  
Dale LaBonte







# reviews

Houseworker's Handbook, Leghorn and Warrior, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge, Ma. 02139. Price \$1.50 109 pages.

The Houseworker's Handbook explores and analyzes the economic roots of woman's oppression. Traces the effects woman's position as unpaid laborer in the home has on her status outside the home and its influence on her political, social and self-image. Contains articles, poetry and graphics from women in this country and abroad. Also contains a chapter on wife beating, the occupational hazard of the houseworker.

Wife Beating, Betsy Warrior, New England Free Press, 60 Union Square, Somerville, Ma. 02173. 25 pages. .40c

The politics of wife beating from an historical and cross-cultural perspective. Takes a look at the prevalence of this crime and the response (or lack of response) to it by the courts, police, psychiatrists, etc. Analyzes how wife beating fits into feminist theory and suggests how the problem can be dealt with now by the woman's movement. Excerpted from the Houseworker's Handbook.

Working on Wife Abuse Betsy Warrior, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge, Ma. 02139 34 pages. \$1.

A resource list of groups and individuals working to offer support, refuges and services to battered women. Also lists publications pertinent to the issue and contains an introduction examining the history and purposes of refuges.

What's a Wife Worth? Leghorn and Warrior, New England Free Press, 60 Union Square, Somerville, Ma., 02143 .30c

A pamphlet on the role housework plays in the economic dependence of women on men. Analyzes this dependence in relation to women's political and social aspirations. Emphasizes the economic base on which the oppression of women rests and how this base is of major importance to feminist theory and practice. Excerpted from the Houseworker's Handbook.





This is the first in a proposed series of book reviews by members of the Spark Bookstore collective in Northampton. The main emphases of the bookstore are feminist writings, children's books and anarchist literature.

Ursula Leguin's *The Dispossessed* offers science fiction that is feminist and political. Although she can be criticized along with many other science fiction writers who don't have female protagonists in their stories, she does offer ideas that few writers have tackled. She does not offer the easy answer of individual survival, one person's victory over interplanetary dynasties, that sci-fi writers glorify. Her book is also not an allegory for a perfect social order. Instead there is a stress on the process by which her characters survive and change, a focus on the tension between individual and community.

The *Dispossessed* are the anarchists who staged a successful enough uprising on their planet to be offered pacification in the form of a convenient moon, large enough to populate. It turns out to be virtually a wasteland, where survival is a matter of harboring scarce resources. Trade is maintained with the mother planet, plant stock and manufactured goods are obtained in exchange for minerals. On Anarres, there are no trees except those which have been planted and carefully tended by the colonists. The colony is organized collectively: all tasks are shared, along with housing, food, and childrearing. With an exciting philosophy guiding the experiment and ingenuity developed to match the hostile environment, it is upsetting that by the third generation Anarres has sprouted a creeping authoritarianism.

## Review:

# The Dispossessed

Shevek is an Odonian: he follows the philosophy of the woman whose ideas sparked the rebellion which led to the settlement of Anarres. As a man, who assumes the basic physical, mental, and social equality of women and the valuable contribution of children, Shevek is an indicator of how much feminist principles have been incorporated into his society.

Overwhelmed by the bombardment of new experiences, it is a while before Shevek encounters the "propetarian" nature of Urras society. Through hints in conversation and difficulty understanding why he has a personal servant, Shevek is led to the realization that the fantastic wealth he is viewing is grounded in the oppression of large segments of the population, and that a cold-war-like impasse separates the two nations which dominate the planet.

Throughout the book, Leguin studies cultural values through the eyes of what would be assumed to be opponents. Shevek, the central character, is an individualist. Anarresti society officially champions individuals, but in fact, it often exercises peer pressure to keep people "in line." Shevek is buffeted by both his love for his home planet and his passion for freedom. As a theoretical scientist he is invited to visit the mother planet, Urras. There he finds a lush world, with everything to offer (enough to waste), with great richness of culture and race.

This is an important reason for a man to be the focus of the book. A woman protagonist would be expected to view other women as equals, and to fight a society that refused that recognition. For Shevek to do so means a society with the presupposition of women's strengths and importance.

THE DISPOSSESSED is not outstanding solely for its portrayal of anarchy as a global way of life. Leguin's genius as a writer comes from her treatment of the subtle problems of living under what we might at first glance take for Utopia. Leguin writes about individual lives and choices. Her characters do not merely face insurmountable obstacles and fight wilfully until they win. Instead, they face themselves. There is the anguish of seeing friends die because they are politically dangerous. Shevek is confronted with his mother's confused feelings for him; his daughter is troubled by schoolmates and neighbors because her father does not fit the Anarres norm. Leguin's characters work as we all do to be accepted into the culture they live in. But, like her readers, they have to be honest with themselves in the end. Sometimes they live up to their own values, sometimes they indulge their weaknesses and shortcomings.





# DES MOINES WOMEN

## FORM SUPPORT GROUP

Our women's caucus first began about three years ago, out of necessity. Support for each other within our study/action group, and a systematic approach to combatting sexism were felt needs growing out of our experience as a group of men and women involved in political struggle.

From the beginning we exemplified our belief that the personal is political. As a group we did not engage in outside political action as such. However, we did provide critical support for each other in struggling with such issues as sexual identity, confronting sexism as it was practiced in action groups we were involved with, and personal problems which called for collective input for solution.

During the winter of 1976, we as a women's group began to struggle with the issue of classism. We divided into smaller groups based on class background, and spent time dealing with questions related to ways in which our background has affected our present situation as women, and how we determined to deal with them. These met until they no longer felt the need, at which point the group as a whole dissolved for several months over the summer.

In August several women expressed desire to develop another strong support group. Many of the same women, and some new women, gathered to determine what our organization would look like. Immediately we formed two groups, having learned from past experience that smaller groups for discussion and support lessen the chance that someone will be excluded. Each group meets every other week, and each has its own agenda. One group has been discussing sexuality. The other group has a bi-weekly check on each person's status, and then gives time for an in-depth personal report from one group member.



have the effect of separating people who were accustomed to meeting together in the past, we decided at our first large meeting that we would form a sort of Federation, and gather together as a larger group at least once every two months. Our first event was a women's campout at the end of October - the second annual event of that kind. We are also planning a women's party in January, which will provide the opportunity to have fun together and to talk with other women who we think are interested in starting a similar group.

In the past, growth has been a problem which we did not resolve. Of course a main objective is to involve as many women as possible in such groups. However, the size of the group affects its effectiveness, and we have been cautious of not getting too big. Also, after meeting together for a period of time, we develop openness and trust, which would be interrupted with too much change in membership. We have agreed to support other women in forming their own groups.



## DES MOINES WOMEN'S GROUPS, (continued)

Our vision includes more groups, self-organized and self-defined, which will become a part of the larger federation. Aside from that, who knows what exciting possibilities we will develop in the future?

Midge Slater



### Three Sick People

at work...  
the impossibility of it  
the illness  
the aloneness  
when one measure of  
revolution touches these  
people's lives  
will they be able to  
REACH for it?  
from the organic rot of  
alcoholism  
the monitored heart  
the inability to  
catch a breath  
are they simply  
water under the bridge?  
while we build  
we plan  
we wreak moronic patterns  
to create  
changing  
growing  
giving  
living  
work for everybody  
will they know?  
will they reach to  
touch a revolution  
made beyond the material wasteland  
of the bodies  
the respirators  
pump  
more desperate life  
into the  
organic rot of alcoholism  
the monitored heart  
the inability to catch a breath

mary disney, d.m.



### A GAY SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE

SHARE YOUR VISIONS

is being formed by lesbians and gay men. We're excited about the creative potential to go beyond today's limits and explore the possibilities of a gay tomorrow.

We need material of all kinds: short stories, illustrations, comic strips, GRAPHICS. We also need paper, stamps, layout supplies, and MONEY; as well as people around NYC who could contribute time and energy. Any or no experience is welcome.

Tell your friends. Anyone interested in getting our first issue, please send whatever donation you can afford.

#### CONTACT:

The Gay Science Fiction Collective  
c/o Come! Unity Press  
13 East 17th Street, 6th fl.  
New York, 10003, New York  
Phone: 675-3043



## The Women

### Who Produced This Issue:

### Who Are We?

We are a group of women in Des Moines, Iowa, who came together to produce the merged anarchist feminist newsletter. As a group this is our only political work together although several of us are involved in some of the same activities; participating in one of the women's groups that has been formed recently (see article); working on a community newspaper called Focus; working as members of a libertarian communist organization called Redwing Workers Organization; working as members of the local chapter of NOW; being involved in collective living and doing workplace organizing are among the things we are doing.



So suggest that the dates for the deadlines and publication be:

| <u>Deadline</u> | <u>Publication-Mailing</u> |
|-----------------|----------------------------|
| November 30     | mid-December               |
| February 28     | mid-March                  |
| May 30          | mid-June                   |
| August 30       | mid-September              |

We feel that knowing the deadline for articles and knowing that our news will be current when it is mailed, will encourage more active participation in the newsletter. It saves a lot of energy to write one letter instead of many! The newsletter is a great way to communicate with a lot of women with relative ease.

#### Mailed Letters Asking for Input

Consistent with our desire to see the newsletter come out on a quarterly basis, we set November 30 as a deadline for this issue and determined to mail it out in Mid-December. We wanted as much participation in the newsletter as possible. Since we couldn't afford to mail a notice to everyone on the mailing list asking for input, we selected groups and individuals who had been active in prior newsletters (ie: written to or helped produce), or who we felt could pass the word. We wrote a letter stating the deadline and asking for responses to the question about input from men and to the idea of the Des Moines women producing the next four issues of the newsletter.

#### Continuing Quarterly Rotation

We think that a regular place to send information combined with a regular time for publishing the newsletter would stabilize the network and encourage participation. We are willing to be responsible for this issue and the next three. After that, we would expect another group to be responsible, hopefully for four issues.

Since we mailed this idea, we have received mixed responses. At this point we are assuming that the publication of the newsletter will continue to rotate with every issue. For this to work however, groups need to come forward and volunteer to produce future issues so that the address for input can be printed in each current issue.

#### The Next Issue

The next issue will be produced by Tiamat, an anarchy-feminist study-support group in Ithaca, NY. Material for the next issue should be sent to them, by February 28 (assuming everyone accepts the proposed dates for deadlines), in care of:

Carol Tiamat Ornstein  
609 N. Tioga St.  
Ithaca, NY 14850



## a women's effort, a women's product

As women, we need to build a stable communications network. We see the Anarchist-Feminist Notes as a vehicle for communication among anarchist and left libertarian feminists. We feel that it should be an effort of women, for women, and by women.

#### DES MOINES WOMEN'S PROPOSALS: GUIDELINES FOR THE NOTES

An ad hoc group of Des Moines femin-

ists met to discuss various issues related to putting together the Anarchist Feminist Notes. These are the decisions we reached. Please write your responses for the next newsletter!

#### What About Input From Men?

We are very much aware of the conflict between our desire for the Notes to remain a women's communication vehicle and an openness to communications from men.

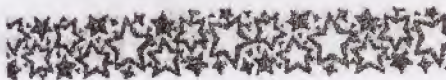
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# A Response to "ANARCHISM & FEMINISM"

Our reactions to "Anarchism and Feminism" by Rebecca Staton (the "talk" which was included in the last issue) are largely positive. For us the major strengths of the talk are the flow and style which link the concepts of anarchism and feminism into a brief, comprehensive perspective. We found it clarifying and helpful. We praise Rebecca for her clarity and efforts!

There are two areas we would like to raise questions about and share our perspective. They are the definitions of "leaderless" and the discussion of strategy--direct action, transforming institutions and alternative building.



A major strength of anarchism is the recognition that we do not need a leader to direct us in the "correct" way (whether it be a so-called vanguard party of the revolution or the guiding guru of a study group.)

A formal leadership position is normally a position of power within a hierarchical organization. When a person occupies the position he (usually) or she has access to specified privileges and powers that can be "exercised over" others within the organization. This style of leadership is at least stifling and at worst exploitive and oppressive. It takes the initiative and control of the situation away from those involved. As Rebecca pointed out, the rejection of this style of leadership is a strength of anarchism and feminism. However, formal leadership positions are not the only type of leadership.

There is a leadership function of providing guidance in particular situations. It grows out of specific skills or experiences one of us has. These are recognized and respected by others. No power is attached to this influence. Those involved can control the influence by not giving up their decision making power. Rotation of tasks and skill sharing are specific ways that both anarchists and feminists have used to avoid power blocks or "leaders" from gaining control.

Failure to make the distinction between authoritarian leadership and influential leadership can result in confusion and manipulation. Confusion comes when we recognize that each of us exercises influence and that the strength of our influence varies and is effected by others. Most people call this "leadership."

Failure to make the distinction is used as an example of the "idealism" of anarchists and feminists--implying that we won't face the reality of people exercising leadership. It's not the reality of leadership that we reject, but the necessity of leaders.

By not recognizing that people exercise leadership, the possibility exists of someone covertly exercising influence. This can be manipulative. It allows cliques to develop and power relationships to evolve. We feel that it's best to acknowledge that our commitment to leaderless groups does not ignore the leadership which we all provide at one time or another. This acknowledgment helps us be aware of influence and call into question any abuses we see.





The second area we'd like to respond to is the section on strategy for revolution. In spite of the length of the article, we felt that the discussions of direct action, transforming institutions and alternative building were inadequate.

The definition of direct action as "armed struggle" is too narrow. Many other forms of resistance, propaganda, agitation and organizing fall in the area of direct action. Rebecca's restricted definition makes it easy to forget direct action as a viable revolutionary strategy. Our experience has been that different forms of direct action such as slow downs at work, leafletting about a neighborhood issue, and so on can be very important in building collectivity and skills for self-organization.

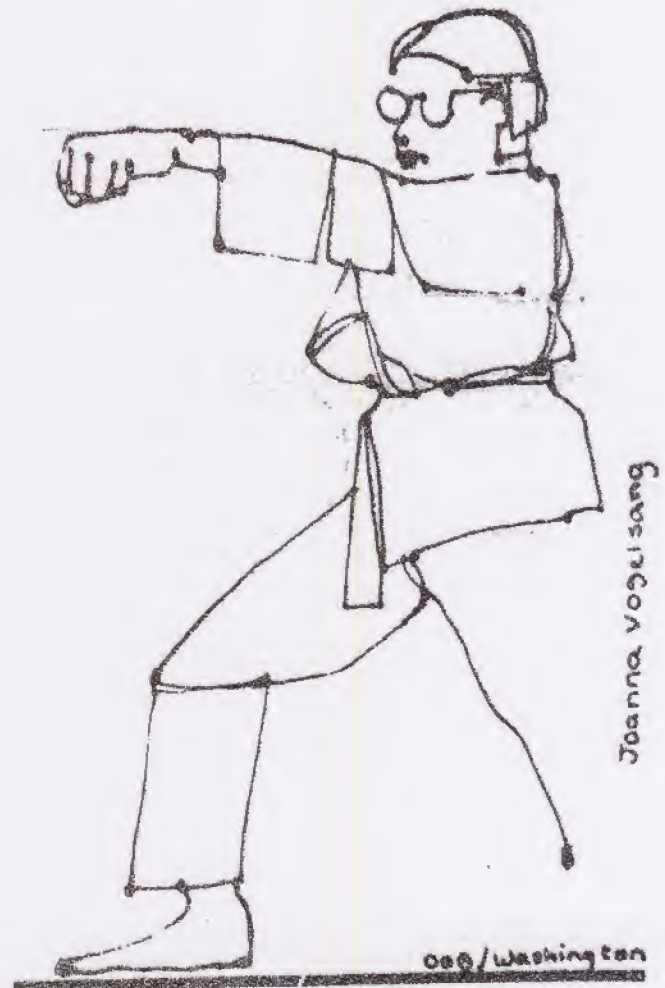
Rebecca's discussion on transforming institutions is too vague. It appears to be a rejection of reformist activities which seek concessions within the rules and structures of capitalist-patriarchal institutions. We agree that this society cannot be changed to meet human needs by making adjustments. Reform is non-revolutionary. Failure to recognize this can lead people into taking bureaucratic and counter-revolutionary positions and actions.

Although we agree with this criticism of transforming institutions, we disagree with the possible unspoken (and possibly unthought) implication that we should not involve ourselves in the institutions of this society. Most people in this society are dependent upon its institutions. As revolutionaries we have little hope of success unless we put ourselves in positions where we can share our ideas and relate them to the daily needs of most people. Some of us need to be working in the institutions of this society.

Reform isn't the only way to engage in action within societies' structures. We need a clear understanding of our resistance to the institution and our desire to destroy the power relationships that maintain

it. Our goal should be to participate in changing necessary parts of society into self-managed communism.

This leads to the third area of strategy, alternative building. We agree with the need to create ways of meeting our own needs. As women we particularly need to make these efforts so we can overcome our isolation by this society. We need to experience and develop our individual and collective strength. We need the confidence and practical "know-how" which creating alternative structures and culture can provide us.



Our hesitation is with the possible implication that building alternatives is the major or only strategy we should adopt. Monopoly capitalist patriarchal society is incredibly flexible. It can tolerate all kinds of alternatives while restricting and guiding them unnoticed. We need to



## 'A WOMEN'S EFFORT...' (continued)

The compromise which we propose is: 1) to accept announcements from men; and 2) to accept inserts. The inserts should be typed and include enough copies for mailing to the total list. Also a contribution to cover any additional postage expenses should be made. If a man or men lacked the resources to meet these guidelines, we would provide them with addresses of other libertarian men who could decide whether to support the effort to communicate. We believe that this is a good compromise since it leaves open the possibility of communication from men and yet would require that all the energy and resources for that communication come from men.

### What About "Editing" Contributions to the Newsletter?

We feel strongly that there should be NO CENSORING OR CONTENT EDITING OF WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTIONS to the newsletter. However, some "editing" may be needed if personal letters are sent so as not to include material that is of a personal nature and not related to the newsletter. We should all be very careful not to control the content of the newsletter.

### Who Should the Notes Be Sent to?

We propose that the Anarchist-Feminist Notes be mailed to the combined mailing lists from the original newsletters and to women listed on other libertarian mailing lists (eg: the midwest anarchist mailing list). Also, all of us participating in the Notes should add the names of women we know who would like to receive the newsletter.

For this issue we also sent a copy to other libertarian newsletters with an announcement of our existence and a request that women who would like to receive additional issues send us their addresses. Otherwise we won't continue to send the Notes to those newsletters.

There are several anarchist or libertarian communist libraries or publications that have requested copies of the newsletter for their collections. We don't see any problems with that. Our wide distribution makes security a moot point. We have sent copies of this issue to those who requested it. If there are any problems with that, please write before the next issue so that the practice can be stopped until further discussion helps us come to some ag-

We also agreed to send copies to men if they request it and send postage.

### What

#### How Do We Handle Long Articles or Letters?

We propose that when anyone sends an article that is longer than two single spaced typewritten pages, she should mark it for possible serializing or try to send a little extra donation to help cover expenses. If it's not marked for serialization and if there is no contribution, we should print it anyway, but if length prohibits, the producing group should divide it into a series.



### RESPONSE, "'ANARCHISM & FEMINISM', (Continued)

be aware of this. At this point in time alternatives are largely defensive. They can easily become simple retreats from the hassles of this society rather than tools for change. Perhaps it is clear by now that we're trying to say "yes, but." We are slowly developing an awareness of the need for a broad understanding of revolutionary strategy. Even though our ideas lack clarity, we feel confident of the need to integrate the positive aspects of direct action and alternative building. Alternative building gives us practice in self-management and allows us to eke out free space for a new society. Direct action is our way of confronting the old so the new can grow.

Please share your ideas and criticisms to help our understanding grow!

Max Green, Karen Johnson, Grant Purdy,  
Lynn Talbot & Mary Bryen  
Des Moines, Iowa





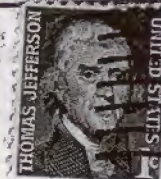
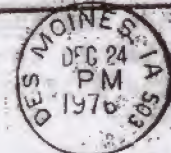
The final costs for putting out this issue can't be precisely figured until we have mailed it. These have been our expenses so far: stencils--\$8.00; paper--21.00; three long distance phone calls (to try to find someone to put out the next issue)--?? (no bill yet); and postage--52.26 (we don't know what the non-USA copies will cost); and address labels--1.85. This comes to \$83.11 so far. We will send a precise amount to the next issue. We received \$9.13 in support for this issue. We produced 370 copies. This is approximately .23 per copy. // Please send what you can to help pay the expenses for this issue and send your contributions for the next issue to Tiamat.

The women who worked to produce this issue included: Grant, Karen, JoAnn, Mary, Phyllis and Tally. We learned a lot and enjoyed working together!

**TIAMAT**

c/o

**609 N. TIOGA ST.  
ITHACA, NY 14850**



*3rd class*

**SUPPORT THE NETWORK! SEND NEWS,  
IDEAS, FEEDBACK, POETRY TO TIAMAT**